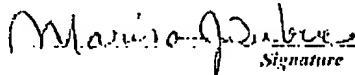


MAY 10 2005

TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF (Large Entity)					Docket No. YOR920010128US1	
In Re Application Of: LI-LUNG CHAO ET AL.						
Application No. 09/800,690	Filing Date 03/07/2001	Examiner MARK A. FADOK	Customer No. 48915	Group Art Unit 3625	Confirmation No. 5054	
Invention: SYSTEM, METHOD AND STORAGE MEDIUM FOR BACK ORDERING OUT OF STOCK PRODUCTS						
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:</u></p> <p>Transmitted herewith in triplicate is the Appeal Brief in this application, with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on January 10, 2005</p> <p>The fee for filing this Appeal Brief is: \$500.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of the fee is enclosed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The Director has already been authorized to charge fees in this application to a Deposit Account.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0510</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.</p> <p>WARNING: Information on this form may become public. Credit card information should not be included on this form. Provide credit card information and authorization on PTO-2038.</p> <p> Signature</p> <p>Dated: May 10, 2005</p> <p>Marisa J. Dubuc Reg. No. 46,673 Cantor Colburn LLP 55 Griffin Road South Bloomfield, CT 06002 860-286-2929</p> <p>cc:</p> <div><p>I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450" [37 CFR 1.8(a)] on</p><p>_____ (Date)</p><p>_____ Signature of Person Mailing Correspondence</p><p>_____ Typed or Printed Name of Person Mailing Correspondence</p></div>						

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appellants:	LI-LUNG CHAO, ET AL.)	
)	
Serial No.:	09/800,690)	Before the Board
)	of Appeals
Filed:	March 07, 2001)	
)	
For:	SYSTEM, METHOD AND STORAGE)	Appeal No.
	MEDIUM FOR BACK ORDERING OUT)	
	OF STOCK PRODUCTS)	
)	

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF

A Petition for Extension of Time (2 months) is filed herewith. This Appeal Brief is submitted in response to the Final Office Action mailed November 8, 2004.

THE REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in this appeal is International Business Machines, Inc. Ownership by International Business Machines, Inc. is established by assignment document recorded for this application on May 7, 2001 on Reel 011788, Frame 0206.

RELATED APPEALS AND INFERENCES

Appellants know of no related patent applications or patents under appeal or interference proceeding.

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STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 1 and 3-21 are pending. Claims 1 and 3-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The rejections of claim 1 and 3-21 are herein appealed.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An amendment was filed on January 11, 2005 to remove issues for consideration on Appeal. Amended claims 11-21 were entered by the Examiner and an Advisory Action was issued on February 4, 2005.

SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

A concise explanation of the subject matter defined in each of the independent claims 1, 7, 11, 16, 20, and 21 involved in the appeal is provided below:

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites "[a] system for back ordering out of stock products."

The system comprising "a host system." (FIG. 1; page 4, lines 10-11)

The system further comprising "a user system in communication with said host system via a network." (FIG. 1; page 4, lines 10-11)

The system further comprising "a database coupled to said host system, said database storing data relating to back ordering out of stock products." (FIG. 1; page 5, lines 17-19; page 5 line 27-page 6 line 2)

The "host system includes instructions for executing a method, comprising receiving an order for a product from said user system." (page 5, lines 15-25; FIG. 2, step 202; page 7, lines 1-2)

The method also comprising "determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order." (FIG. 2, step 204; page 7, lines 6-10)

The method also comprising "notifying said user system if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (page 7, lines 15-17)

The method further comprising "receiving a back order request from said user system to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "receiving a time period request from said user system for setting a time that said back order request is to remain in effect." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request." Referring to page 3, "when a customer submits an order, the e-Marketplace Web site may provide real-time inquiries on whether the quantities of the products ordered are in stock, and can be fulfilled (lines 18-20). The quantity provided in the order is used in the back order request (FIG. 2, step 212), which is sent to a supplier for fulfillment (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "acquiring said amount and updating said inventory." (FIG. 2, step 216; page 7, line 27-page 8, line 1)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system that said back order request has been satisfied." (page 8, lines 21-25)

The method also comprising "in response to said notifying said user that said back order request has been satisfied, receiving a delivery request from said user system to deliver said product." (page 9, lines 11-15)

Claim 7

Claim 7 recites "[a] system for back ordering out of stock products."

The system comprising "a host system." (FIG. 1; page 4, lines 10-11)

The system also comprising "a user system in communication with said host system via a network." (FIG. 1; page 4, lines 10-11)

The system further comprising "a supplier system in communication with said host system via said network." (FIG. 1; page 4, lines 10-11; page 5, lines 2-3)

The system also comprising "a database coupled to said host system, said database storing data relating to said back ordering out of stock products." (FIG. 1; page 5, lines 17-19; page 5, line 27-page 6, line 2)

The "host system includes instructions for implementing a method, comprising: receiving an order for a product from said user system." (page 5, lines 15-25; FIG. 2, step 202; page 7, lines 1-2)

The method also comprising "determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order." (FIG. 2, step 204; page 7, lines 6-10)

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The method also comprising "notifying said user system if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (page 7, lines 15-17)

The method also comprising "receiving a back order request from said user system to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "sending a supplier request to said supplier system for fulfilling said back order request." (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 24-27)

The method further comprising "receiving an inventory update request from said supplier system, wherein said inventory update request includes an amount of said product for fulfilling said back order request." Referring to page 3, "when a customer submits an order, the e-Marketplace Web site may provide real-time inquiries on whether the quantities of the products ordered are in stock, and can be fulfilled (lines 18-20). The quantity provided in the order is used in the back order request (FIG. 2, step 212), which is sent to a supplier for fulfillment (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "notifying said user system that said back order request has been satisfied." (page 8, lines 21-25)

The method further comprising "receiving a delivery request from said user system to deliver said product." (page 9, lines 11-15)

Claim 11

Claim 11 recites "[a] method for back ordering out of stock products."

The method comprising "receiving an order for a product from a user system over a network." (FIG. 1; page 5, lines 15-25; FIG. 2, step 202; page 7, lines 1-2)

The method further comprising "searching an inventory database and determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order." (FIG. 2, step 204; page 7, lines 6-10)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (page 7, lines 15-17)

The method also comprising "receiving a back order request from said user system via said network to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request." Referring to page 3, "when a customer submits an order, the e-Marketplace Web site may provide real-time inquiries on whether the quantities of the products ordered are in stock, and can be fulfilled (lines 18-20). The quantity provided in the order is used in the back order request (FIG. 2, step 212), which is sent to a supplier for fulfillment (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method further comprising "acquiring said amount and updating said inventory database." (FIG. 2, step 216; page 7, line 27-page 8, line 1)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network that said back order request has been satisfied." (page 8, lines 21-25)

The method also comprising "receiving a delivery request from said user system via said network to deliver said product." (page 9, lines 11-15)

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Claim 16

Claim 16 recites "[a] method for back ordering out of stock products."

The method comprising "receiving an order for a product from a user system via a network." (page 5, lines 15-25; FIG. 2, step 202; page 7, lines 1-2)

The method further comprising "searching an inventory database and determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order." (FIG. 2, step 204; page 7, lines 6-10)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (page 7, lines 15-17)

The method further comprising "receiving a back order request from said user system via said network to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method further comprising "sending a supplier request to a supplier system over said network for fulfilling said back order request." (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 24-27)

The method further comprising "receiving an inventory update request from said supplier system via said network, wherein said inventory update request includes an amount of said product for fulfilling said back order request." Referring to page 3, "when a customer submits an order, the e-Marketplace Web site may provide real-time inquiries on whether the quantities of the products ordered are in stock, and can be fulfilled (lines

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18-20). The quantity provided in the order is used in the back order request (FIG. 2, step 212), which is sent to a supplier for fulfillment (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network that said back order request has been satisfied." (page 8, lines 21-25)

The method further comprising "receiving a delivery request from said user system via said network to deliver said product." (page 9, lines 11-15)

Claim 20

Claim 20 recites "[a] storage medium encoded with computer-readable program code for back ordering out of stock products, the program code including instructions for causing a processor to implement a method."

The method comprising "receiving an order for a product from a user system over a network." (FIG. 1; page 5, lines 15-25; FIG. 2, step 202; page 7, lines 1-2)

The method further comprising "searching an inventory database and determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order." (FIG. 2, step 204; page 7, lines 6-10)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (page 7, lines 15-17)

The method also comprising "receiving a back order request from said user system via said network to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method also comprising "determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request." Referring to page 3, "when a customer submits an order, the e-Marketplace Web site may provide real-time inquiries on whether the quantities of the products ordered are in stock, and can be fulfilled (lines 18-20). The quantity provided in the order is used in the back order request (FIG. 2, step 212), which is sent to a supplier for fulfillment (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method further comprising "acquiring said amount and updating said inventory database." (FIG. 2, step 216; page 7, line 27-page 8, line 1)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network that said back order request has been satisfied." (page 8, lines 21-25)

The method also comprising "receiving a delivery request from said user system via said network to deliver said product." (page 9, lines 11-15)

Claim 21

Claim 21 recites "[a] storage medium encoded with computer-readable program code for back ordering out of stock products, the program code including instructions for causing a processor to implement a method."

The method comprising "receiving an order for a product from a user system via a network." (page 5, lines 15-25; FIG. 2, step 202; page 7, lines 1-2)

The method further comprising "searching an inventory database and determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order." (FIG. 2, step 204; page 7, lines 6-10)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (page 7, lines 15-17)

The method further comprising "receiving a back order request from said user system via said network to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order." (FIG. 2, step 212; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method further comprising "sending a supplier request to a supplier system over said network for fulfilling said back order request." (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 24-27)

The method further comprising "receiving an inventory update request from said supplier system via said network, wherein said inventory update request includes an amount of said product for fulfilling said back order request." Referring to page 3, "when a customer submits an order, the e-Marketplace Web site may provide real-time inquiries on whether the quantities of the products ordered are in stock, and can be fulfilled (lines 18-20). The quantity provided in the order is used in the back order request (FIG. 2, step 212), which is sent to a supplier for fulfillment (FIG. 2, step 214; page 7, lines 19-21)

The method further comprising "notifying said user system via said network that said back order request has been satisfied." (page 8, lines 21-25)

The method further comprising "receiving a delivery request from said user system via said network to deliver said product." (page 9, lines 11-15)

GROUND'S OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

This submission is presented in response to the Final Office Action dated November 8, 2004 and Advisory Action dated February 4, 2005, in which claims 1 and 3-21 are pending. Claims 1 and 3-21 have been rejected as being allegedly unpatentable over Alnwick, in view of Ahluwalia, Pritchard, Furphy, and further in view of Official Notice. The rejection of claims 1 and 3-21 as being allegedly unpatentable over Alnwick, in view of Ahluwalia, Pritchard, Furphy, and further in view of Official Notice is to be reviewed on appeal.

ARGUMENT

Claims 1 and 3-21 have been rejected as being allegedly unpatentable over Alnwick, in view of Ahluwalia, Pritchard, Furphy, and further in view of Official Notice.

The Examiner states, with respect to claim 1, that Alnwick discloses "a host system; a user system in communication with said host system via a network; and a database coupled to said host system, said database storing data relating to back ordering out of stock products; wherein said host system includes instructions for executing a method, comprising: receiving an order for a product from said user system; determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order; notifying said user system if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order; receiving a back order request from said user system to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order."

Referring to the Figures of Alnwick, an exchange platform for allowing buyers and sellers for engaging in the resale of computer components (page 1, par. 12, par. 15) is disclosed. A number of vendors submit inventories for review by a number of exchange customers (page 1, par 14). Thus, the Alnwick reference recites a broker-based model for "reselling computer parts which allows customers to almost instantaneously determine available inventory, correlate to a manufacturer part number, and rapidly place the order"

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(page 1, par. 11). Alnwick is devoid of teaching a host system executing back order functions between users and suppliers, but rather provides websites for one or more wholesalers including a home page for each of the wholesalers...[whereby] a customer would be able to determine whether a particular component was in stock utilizing the webpage of a particular dealer" (Abstract). In addition, a "customer could search the inventories of the sellers and would be able to contact the sellers directly to place an order to utilize the exchange platform to place the order" (Abstract).

The Examiner concedes that Alnwick does not disclose that the inventory is updated after the back ordered product is received and that the customer is notified. However, the Examiner states that Ahluwalia teaches updating inventory on a regular basis (col. 11, lines 11-60), and notifying the customer that the item has been received (Ahluwalia, col. 10, lines 20-37). The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Alnwick to include updating the inventory and notifying the customer of the status. The Appellants submit that the Examiner has erred in this assessment. In proper context, the inventory updating and customer notification elements recited in claim 1 recite "determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request; acquiring said amount and updating said inventory; notifying said user system that said back order request has been satisfied." Thus, the inventory updates and status notification recited in claim 1 is directed to backorder information. Ahluwalia discloses "an inventory database 612, which contains the updated inventory data at all the dealerships and products in-process...[and] a data cleansing or inventory data verification process may be used [ensuring] that the inventory data is in a consistent and accurate format and that is suitable for consumer searching and display" (col. 11, lines 11-27). Accordingly, the updating and notification processes as taught by Ahluwalia would not cure the deficiencies of Alnwick.

The Examiner further concedes that neither of Alnwick nor Ahluwalia teaches placing a time limit on the back order designated by a customer but contends that Furphy

teaches this element. Furphy is directed to a transaction platform that can process transactions on both sides between trading partners based on a single set of data" (par. 0012). The transaction platform provides "discrepancy resolution" and reduces the unnecessary administrative infrastructure associated with invoice processing between trading partners (par. 0013). The Appellants submit that the deficiencies of Alnwick and Ahluwalia would not be cured by Furphy. In particular, the Examiner states that Furphy discloses placing a time limit on the back order. In fact, the time limit referenced by Furphy is directed to resolving discrepancies noted in electronic documents shared between two parties (par. 0060-0065).

In addition, the Examiner concedes that neither Alnwick nor Ahluwalia discloses a response to a status update and an authorization to deliver a product, but contends that Pritchard teaches this element. Pritchard is directed to vehicle purchasing and involves (and, in fact, requires) communications among three separate entities, namely, the manufacturer, the dealer, and the purchaser. Any notification relating to satisfaction of a backordered product originates from the manufacturer, is communicated to the dealer, who then, in turn, notifies the purchaser (Pritchard, page 2, par. 11). The notifications recited in claim 1 transpire between the host system and user system. Accordingly, the deficiencies of Alnwick and Ahluwalia are not cured by Pritchard.

Accordingly, since none of Alnwick, Ahluwalia, Furphy, and Pritchard, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element of Appellants' claim 1, the Appellants submit that claim 1 is patentable over Alnwick in view of Ahluwalia, Furphy, Pritchard, and Official Notice. Claims 3-6 depend from claim 1 and, thus, include all of the limitations of claim 1. At least due to their dependencies on allowable claim 1, claims 3-6 patentably define over Alnwick in view of Ahluwalia, Furphy, Pritchard, and Official Notice. Claims 7, 11, 16, 20, and 21 recite similar limitations as those described above with respect to claim 1. Appellants submit that claims 7, 11, 16, 20, and 21 patentably define over for at least the reasons presented above with respect to claim 1. Claims 8 and 10 depend from claim 7 and, thus, include all of the limitations of claim 7. Claims 12-15 depend from claim 11 and thus, include all of the limitations of claim 11.

Claims 17-19 depend from claim 16 and, thus, include all of the limitations of claim 16. At least due to their dependencies on allowable claims 7, 11, and 16, claims 8-10, 12-15, and 17-19, respectively, patentably define over Alnwick in view of Ahluwalia, Furphy, Pritchard, and Official Notice.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is urged that the final rejection of claims 1 and 3-21 be overturned. The final rejection is in error and should be reversed. The fee set forth in 37 CFR 41.20(b)(2) is enclosed herewith. If there are any additional charges with respect to this Appeal Brief, or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 50-0510 maintained by Appellants' assignee.

Respectfully submitted,

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CLAIM APPENDIX

Claim 1. A system for back ordering out of stock products, the system comprising:

a host system;

a user system in communication with said host system via a network; and

a database coupled to said host system, said database storing data relating to back ordering out of stock products;

wherein said host system includes instructions for executing a method, comprising:

receiving an order for a product from said user system;

determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order;

notifying said user system if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;

receiving a back order request from said user system to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;

receiving a time period request from said user system for setting a time that said back order request is to remain in effect;

determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request;

acquiring said amount and updating said inventory;

notifying said user system that said back order request has been satisfied; and

in response to said notifying said user that said back order request has been satisfied, receiving a delivery request from said user system to deliver said product.

Claim 2. (canceled)

Claim 3. The system of claim 1, further comprising a supplier system in communication with said host system via said network, wherein said acquiring said amount and updating said inventory by said host system includes:

- requesting said amount from said supplier system; and
- receiving a request from said supplier system to add said amount to said inventory.

Claim 4. The system of claim 1, wherein said host system further performs:

- in response to said receiving a time period request from said user;
- determining whether said time period request has expired; and
- deleting said back order request if said time period request has expired.

Claim 5. The system of claim 1, wherein said host system further performs:

- notifying said user system that said back order request will remain on hold for a predetermined time;
- determining whether said predetermined time has expired; and
- deleting said back order request if said predetermined time has expired.

Claim 6. The system of claim 1, wherein in response to receiving said delivery request from said user system, said host system further performs:

- sending a back order confirmation request to said user system;
- receiving a back order confirmation; and
- reducing said inventory data to reflect said back order confirmation.

Claim 7. A system for back ordering out of stock products, the system comprising:

- a host system;
- a user system in communication with said host system via a network;
- a supplier system in communication with said host system via said network; and

a database coupled to said host system, said database storing data relating to said back ordering out of stock products;

wherein said host system includes instructions for implementing a method, comprising:

receiving an order for a product from a said user system;
determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said

order;

notifying said user system if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;

receiving a back order request from said user system to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;

sending a supplier request to a said supplier system for fulfilling said back order request;

receiving an inventory update request from said supplier system, wherein said inventory update request includes an amount of said product for fulfilling said back order request;

notifying said user system that said back order request has been satisfied; and

receiving a delivery request from said user system to deliver said product.

Claim 8. The system of claim 7, wherein said host system further performs:

receiving a time period request from said user system for setting a time that said back order request is to remain in effect;

determining whether said time period request has expired; and

deleting said back order request if said time period request has expired.

Claim 9. The system of claim 7, wherein said host system further performs:

notifying said user system that said back order request will remain on hold for a predetermined time;
determining whether said predetermined time has expired; and
deleting said back order request if said predetermined time has expired.

Claim 10. The system of claim 7 wherein in response to receiving said delivery request from said user system, said host system further performs:

sending a back order confirmation request to said user system;
receiving a back order confirmation; and
reducing said inventory data to reflect said back order confirmation.

Claim 11. A method for back ordering out of stock products, the method comprising:

receiving an order for a product from a user system over a network;
searching an inventory database and determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order;
notifying said user system via said network if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
receiving a back order request from said user system via said network to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request;
acquiring said amount and updating said inventory database;
notifying said user system via said network that said back order request has been satisfied; and
receiving a delivery request from said user system via said network to deliver said product.

Claim 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said acquiring said amount and updating said inventory database includes:

requesting said amount from a supplier via said network; and

receiving a request from said supplier via said network to add said amount to said inventory.

Claim 13. The method of claim 11, further including:

receiving a time period request from said user system for setting a time that said back order request is to remain in effect;
determining whether said time period request has expired; and
deleting said back order request if said time period request has expired.

Claim 14. The method of claim 11, further including:

notifying said user system via said network that said back order request will remain on hold for a predetermined time;
determining whether said predetermined time has expired; and
deleting said back order request if said predetermined time has expired.

Claim 15. The method of claim 11, wherein said delivery request includes:

sending a back order confirmation request to said user system via said network;
receiving a back order confirmation via said network; and
reducing said inventory data in said inventory database to reflect said back order confirmation.

Claim 16. A method for back ordering out of stock products, the method comprising:

receiving an order for a product from a user system via a network;
searching an inventory database and determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order;
notifying said user system via said network if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
receiving a back order request from said user system via said network to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;

sending a supplier request to a supplier system over said network for fulfilling said back order request;

receiving an inventory update request from said supplier system via said network, wherein said inventory update request includes an amount of said product for fulfilling said back order request;

notifying said user system via said network that said back order request has been satisfied; and

receiving a delivery request from said user system via said network to deliver said product.

Claim 17. The method of claim 16, further including:

receiving a time period request from said user system via said network for setting a time that said back order request is to remain in effect;

determining whether said time period request has expired; and

deleting said back order request if said time period request has expired.

Claim 18. The method of claim 16, further including:

notifying said user system via said network that said back order request will remain on hold for a predetermined time;

determining whether said predetermined time has expired; and

deleting said back order request if said predetermined time has expired.

Claim 19. The method of claim 16, wherein said delivery request includes:

sending a back order confirmation request to said user system via said network;

receiving a back order confirmation via said network; and

reducing said inventory data in said inventory database to reflect said back order confirmation.

Claim 20. A storage medium encoded with computer-readable program code for back ordering out of stock products, the program code including instructions for causing a processor to implement a method comprising:

- receiving an order for a product from a user;
- determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order;
- notifying said user if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
- receiving a back order request from said user to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
- determining an amount of said product for meeting said back order request;
- acquiring said amount and updating said inventory;
- notifying said user that said back order request has been satisfied; and
- receiving a delivery request from said user to deliver said product.

Claim 21. A storage medium encoded with computer-readable program code for back ordering out of stock products, the program code including instructions for causing a processor to implement a method comprising:

- receiving an order for a product from a user;
- determining whether inventory for said product satisfies said order;
- notifying said user if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
- receiving a back order request from said user to back order said product if said inventory for said product does not satisfy said order;
- sending a supplier request to a supplier for fulfilling said back order request;
- receiving an inventory update request from said supplier, wherein said inventory update request includes an amount of said product for fulfilling said back order request;
- notifying said user that said back order request has been satisfied; and
- receiving a delivery request from said user to deliver said product.